



Department of
Education

Learning changes lives

WA Education Awards 2026

Nomination guide



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians of the lands, seas, skies and waterways where we are privileged to live and work.

We acknowledge Elders past and present, who generously share their knowledge and wisdom and continue to nurture Country, share culture, and strengthen communities. We acknowledge the strengths and cultural identities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students bring to their classrooms and strive to build a culturally responsive system that supports them as they walk in the footsteps of their ancestors.

We acknowledge and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people we connect with; we commit to building a brighter future together, enriched by their oral histories, stories, lived experiences and living cultures.

This report uses the term 'Aboriginal' to respectfully refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

TRIM: XXX/XXXXXXX

© Department of Education Western Australia 2026

Department of Education
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
9264 4111
education.wa.edu.au

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License](#).

This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.



WA Education Awards 2026

The WA Education Awards celebrate the achievements of public schools and teachers in Western Australia, delivering positive outcomes for all students.

This year 8 award categories recognise schools and teachers that demonstrate excellence in leadership, teaching and learning (primary, secondary and early childhood), cultural responsiveness, disability and inclusion, and wellbeing.

Key dates

Nominations open: Monday 15 June

Nominations close: 5 pm Wednesday 29 July

Judging: August to October

Announcement of finalists: September

Presentation event: Monday 16 November

Who is eligible to be nominated?

All Western Australian public schools and teachers are eligible to be nominated.

All previous nominees, finalists and winners of the WA Education Awards are eligible to be nominated in 2026. Schools and individuals who were recipients of an award in the past 5 years are not eligible for nomination within the category in which they received their award. They are eligible for nomination in all other categories. Schools can be nominated in more than one category. K-12, remote community and district high schools can choose either the primary, secondary or early childhood category which best suits the context of their school and nomination.

Prize money

In recognising school communities:

- winning schools receive \$20,000 to go towards a project or program
- finalist schools receive \$5,000 to go towards a project or program.

Minister's Teacher of the Year award:

- winner receives \$20,000 to go towards professional development
- finalists receive \$5,000 to go towards professional development.

Who can submit a nomination?

Public school staff (including principals), school council and board chairs and P&C presidents can nominate their own school or a teacher for an award. Nominations can also be submitted for schools or teachers by Department of Education system leaders including collegiate principals, directors of education, public school review directors and central services directors. The principal must endorse the nomination before it is submitted.

Award categories

Excellence in school leadership

This award celebrates schools and teams taking an inclusive approach to leadership where shared responsibility and a focus on collective impact, rather than individual achievement, is encouraged. This award recognises schools that create and sustain the conditions for all students to achieve and progress. It acknowledges that collective leadership can happen at all levels.

Excellence in teaching and learning – primary

This award acknowledges primary schools that demonstrate excellence in teaching and learning. It recognises schools that create an environment in which students are positively impacted through excellent learning and teaching. Schools being nominated for this award should demonstrate collaboration, inclusion and show innovative ways to enhance student achievement and progress.

Excellence in teaching and learning – secondary

This award acknowledges secondary schools that demonstrate excellence in teaching and learning. It recognises schools that create an environment in which students are positively impacted through excellent learning and teaching. Schools being nominated for this award should demonstrate collaboration, inclusion and show innovative ways to enhance student achievement and progress.

Excellence in cultural responsiveness

This award recognises schools that lead equity and reconciliation through culturally responsive, approaches. It acknowledges schools that demonstrate a commitment to building culturally safe and engaging learning environments for Aboriginal students. The award recognises schools that lead the whole school community in strengthening their knowledge, understanding and respect for Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages. It celebrates schools that contribute to and benefit from reconciliation.



Excellence in disability and inclusion

This award acknowledges schools and teams that demonstrate excellence in meeting the diverse needs of students, their parents, families and communities. It recognises schools that provide engaging and inclusive learning programs and environments for students with a disability or an imputed disability. Schools being nominated for this award should demonstrate the collaborative, inclusive and innovative ways they are enabling equitable access to education and other opportunities.

Excellence in wellbeing and learning

This award acknowledges schools that demonstrate excellence in meeting the wellbeing needs of students, creating school environments where every student feels valued and welcome, enhancing student achievement and progress. This could be achieved through enrichment programs that engage students in learning such as sport or art, innovative partnerships or programs, or approaches that ensure all students have a sense of belonging and connection, that positively impact their wellbeing. These initiatives demonstrate successful student engagement by building strong relationships between students and the school community while considering the physical, psychological, social, spiritual and environmental contexts.

Excellence in early childhood education

This award acknowledges early childhood centres and early years programs in WA that demonstrate excellence in early learning and development. It recognises settings where play-based, child-centred approaches and innovative teaching strategies create holistic learning environments, advancing children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Nominees should demonstrate strong partnerships with families and communities, inclusive practices for learners of all backgrounds and abilities, and evidence of positive, measurable impact on children's learning outcomes and wellbeing.

Minister's Teacher of the Year

This award recognises exemplary teachers across early childhood, primary, secondary and education support settings who demonstrate outstanding professional knowledge, practice and engagement. It acknowledges educators who have a deep understanding of their students and curriculum, using evidence-informed pedagogy to meet diverse learning needs and maximise student outcomes. The award also recognises their professional leadership in collaborating with colleagues, parents and the community, sharing expertise and initiating activities that improve educational opportunities for all students, exemplifying the highest standards of the teaching profession.

How to nominate

Follow the step-by-step guide to prepare and submit your nomination.

1. Choose the award category

Select the category that best fits your achievements to make your nomination shine. Do you have an inspiring story of leadership to tell?

The school principal, leadership team, staff and broader school community should be informed and supportive of a nomination. The best nominations are a team effort.

2. Read the terms and conditions

Read the terms and conditions at the end of this guide for important information on eligibility, endorsement and other requirements.

3. Write the nomination

Your written statement needs to demonstrate your or your school's achievements in the context of the award category. Find out more about writing your nomination later in this guide.

You must use the written statement template to write your nomination.

Download the template at education.wa.edu.au/awards

4. Promotional summary

As part of the online nomination form, schools will be asked to provide a short summary (250 words maximum) outlining what makes their school a worthy award finalist.

This response is intended for promotional and marketing purposes and may be used in finalist announcements, event materials, social media or other communications. Schools are encouraged to write this summary in a clear, engaging and community-friendly way, avoiding overly technical or educational jargon where possible.

5. Get endorsement

Once your nomination is complete, it must be endorsed by the principal.

6. Gather your documents and photos

When you submit your nomination, you will need:

- the completed written statement using the nomination template
- endorsement from the principal of the teacher or school nominated.

You are also encouraged to submit 5 photos of the school (for school categories) or the teacher (for the Minister's Teacher of the Year category). These don't form part of the judges' assessments but will be used to promote you/your school if you are a finalist or winner.

Where possible your photos should relate to the achievements outlined in your nomination and:

- be a mix of posed and action shots
- include staff and students, not focussed on facilities
- be at least 2MB each
- be in an image file format, such as JPEG (do not include photos in a Word document)
- have all relevant photo permissions.

All files must be named clearly and include the name of the school or teacher.

7. Submit the nomination online

Complete the nomination form online at education.wa.edu.au/awards

This is the final step in preparing your nomination. You need to complete the form in one go, so make sure you have all your finished documents ready to upload.

**Nominations close 5 pm
Wednesday 29 July 2026.**

Please allow yourself plenty of time to complete the online nomination form as late submissions will not be accepted.

Write your nomination

Your written statement needs to demonstrate achievements against the domains/selection criteria, supported with examples and evidence.

While all the domains or selection criteria are important, you may determine that a greater focus is required on some over others. The written statement must be no more than 3 pages and use size 11 pt Arial font. No other attachments or supporting documents are permitted. Use your limited space wisely.

School category awards

For school category award nominations, all 6 of the Public School Review Standard domains must be addressed:

- relationship and partnerships
- learning environment
- leadership
- use of resources
- teaching quality
- student achievement and progress.

When addressing these areas also reflect on:

- student achievement, both progress and performance
- inclusive cultures
- engagement with community
- impact for Aboriginal students and acts of reconciliation (if no Aboriginal students attend the school, then understanding Aboriginal cultures and commitment to knowing, being and doing acts of reconciliation).

Nominators may also refer to other resources, such as the:

- Quality Teaching Strategy and Teaching for Impact
- School Improvement and Accountability Framework
- Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework
- The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Code of Conduct and the Standards

These documents, and the Public School Review Standard, are available at education.wa.edu.au/awards.

Minister's Teacher of the Year award

For the Minister's Teacher of the Year award nominations, all 3 of the selection criteria below must be addressed.

Professional knowledge

- appropriate knowledge of factors that influence learning and development
- knowledge of teaching specialisation such as discipline and/or stage of schooling
- application of relevant theories, research, models and experience
- use of appropriate pedagogies, interactive technologies and a wide range of resources

Professional practice

- creating stimulating and challenging learning opportunities for all students
- using assessment and reflection to inform planning and learning
- creating safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments
- building effective relationships and partnerships

Professional engagement

- contributing to school planning, development and management
- encouraging and leading opportunities for professional learning and reflection
- contributing to the confidence, resilience and success of the school community
- adapting to change and embracing new opportunities
- participating in personal professional development

Need help?

If you have any questions or need help, please email waeducationawards@education.wa.edu.au

Judging process

Selection of finalists

When nominations close, the judging panels will assess nominations and select 4 finalists from each category. All finalists will be subject to further endorsement by Corporate Executive, Standards and Integrity and the Minister for Education. Finalists will be announced in September.

Selection of winners

After finalists are announced, the judging panels will reconvene to begin the process of selecting a winner of each category. Finalists will be asked to present to the judging panel. This may include face to face, online or a school site visit. The judges will consider each finalist's nomination, presentation and interview to select a winner. Within each category, the same Chair, Deputy Chair and two panel members will oversee both the shortlisting process and the selection of the final winner. The 2026 Minister's Teacher of the Year award winner is selected by the Minister.

Awards presentation event

The winners will be announced at a presentation event in November. Finalists will receive two complimentary tickets to the Awards Presentation and are required to attend in order to remain eligible.

Ambassador role

Winners and finalists are recognised as ambassadors for the WA education sector and may at times be called upon to participate in forums and speak at events. Activities following the awards may include:

- photo and video shoots promoting your achievements
- interview opportunities with local media outlets
- presenting at education forums and events
- judging for your award category in future years.



Terms and conditions

You agree to these terms and conditions when you submit a nomination.

Contents

- [Definitions](#)
- [Nominations](#)
- [Nomination endorsement](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Judging](#)
- [Finalists and winners](#)
- [Prize money expenditure](#)

Definitions

In these terms and conditions:

- 'Department' means the Department of Education Western Australia
- 'school' and 'public school' mean a government school established under s.55 of the *School Education Act 1999* (WA)
- 'teacher' means a member of the teaching staff in relation to a government school established under s.55 of the *School Education Act 1999* (WA)
- 'staff' means an employee of the Department of Education Western Australia
- 'website' means the Department of Education public website available at education.wa.edu.au, and the pages and information within.

Nominations

1. By submitting a nomination, the nominator and the endorsing principal of the nominated school or teacher agree to abide by these terms and conditions, and that a breach of may result in exclusion or disqualification at the determination of the Department.
2. Nominations by the following people may only be submitted:
 - public school staff
 - school council and board chairs
 - parent and citizens' association presidents.
3. Nominations by directors of education may be submitted for a school or teacher in their region.
4. Nominations by staff in the following positions, and not mentioned above, may be submitted for any school or teacher:
 - central services director and above
 - collegiate principal.
5. All persons otherwise are not eligible to submit a nomination, including but not limited to students, parents, third-party providers and community members.
6. Nominations must be submitted using the online submission form on the website before 5 pm on Wednesday 29 July 2026.
7. The written statement must respond to each of the selection criteria using the template provided on the website.
8. The written statement must be no more than 3 single-sided A4 pages and use size 11 pt Arial font.
9. All sections of the nomination must be completed, and all requested attachments provided.
10. By entering the awards, the nominator confirms that the nominee:
 - is responsible for maintaining and recording parent/ carer/adult permission to publish students and adults featured in photos they submit
 - will inform the Department of changes to provided permission.
11. By entering the awards, the nominator and principal agree for their school photographs, profiles and other information to be used for promotional purposes by the Department of Education and Government of Western Australia.
12. All nominations will be treated with the strictest of confidence.
13. All nominations submitted become the sole property of the Department of Education and will not be returned.
14. All nomination material will comply with the *State Records Act 2000* (WA).
15. Schools and individuals who were recipients of an award in the past 5 years are not eligible for nomination within the category in which they received their award. They are eligible for nomination in all other categories

Nomination endorsement

16. Nominations must be endorsed by the principal.

Eligibility

17. All Western Australian public schools are eligible to be nominated, including early childhood, education support and special educational needs.
18. All Western Australian public school teachers are eligible to be nominated for the Minister's Teacher of the Year category.
19. Schools can be nominated in more than one category.
20. Previous school and teacher winners, finalists and nominees of the WA Education Awards are eligible for nomination.
21. Nominations must be for a single school or teacher. Dual, joint or co-nominations will not be accepted.

Judging

22. Nominated and finalist schools and teachers may be subject to further endorsement by Corporate Executive, Standards and Integrity and the Minister for Education. The Department reserves the right to not proceed with, deem ineligible, exclude or disqualify a nomination where Standards and Integrity or other unresolved matters with the Department or other agencies are identified.
23. Shortlisting and judging panel members will not assess nominations over the specified page limits.
24. All nominated schools and teachers agree to abide by the decisions of the shortlisting and judging panels. No appeals will be considered, nor correspondence or feedback provided.

Finalists and winners

25. Principals of finalist schools and teachers are encouraged to attend either a 40-minute video conference or site visit with the judging panel, accompanied by one other school representative of their choice, at a date and time determined by the Department.
 - During the video conference, finalists may give a 20-minute presentation to the judging panel then participate in a 20-minute interview. Presentations should include visual aids such as a PowerPoint presentation.
 - While efforts will be made to provide support, the principal or nominated teacher is responsible for ensuring their technological capacity to participate in the video conference and share their presentation, including compatible devices and bandwidth. Finalists will be provided the opportunity to test their equipment prior to the conference.

26. Winners will be announced at a presentation event in Term 4. Finalists must attend this event to remain eligible, unless in extraordinary circumstances at the discretion of the Department.
27. Where a finalist school or teacher is located outside the Perth metropolitan area, travel and accommodation for one night will be provided for 2 staff members (limited to one allocation per school, regardless of the number of categories in which they are finalists) to travel to Perth for the presentation event in accordance with travelling allowance provisions of the relevant industrial award. Travel and accommodation expenses will not be provided for additional staff or guests.
28. Finalist and winner schools and teachers are required to participate in promotional and media activities for the awards program. Principals must make all reasonable efforts to engage their staff, school and community in promotional activities as required.
29. Winning schools and teachers may be requested to present to Corporate Executive or other groups to share their story about the awards and how their win provided benefits to the school.

Prize money expenditure

30. Winning schools must allocate their prize money to a school project or program, professional development for staff, student resources or other suitable activities.
31. Winning teachers must allocate their prize money to professional development or other suitable activities.
32. All prize money must be spent within the following calendar year.
33. Winning schools and teachers will be required to obtain expenditure approval from the Department using a provided form to detail the proposed expenditure of the prize money and outline the aims and expected outcomes of the expenditure.
34. Winning schools and teachers are required to submit a report detailing the outcomes of their expenditure.



Learning changes lives

